

# BALLINABRANNA NATIONAL SCHOOL

Milford

Co. Carlow

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**12<sup>th</sup> of May 2021**

We welcome Róisín Mangan back to the school this week and we thank Brigid Keating for her wonderful work at the school over the past six months as SNA and we wish her every success in the future.

Shannon Young joins us on School Placement this week. Shannon will be working with 6<sup>th</sup> class as part of her preparation and studies for teaching.

**Athletics** – Children from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class enjoyed participating in St Abban’s Athletics’ Club online track and field competition recently with thanks to their teachers Mr Breen and Ms Agars for organising this event in school. The competition involved four events:

1. Standing Long Jump – Who Jumps the farthest in Standing Long Jump
2. Vertical High Jump – Who has the greatest difference between reach and completed jump
3. 50m Sprint – Who Completes the 50m Sprint the fastest
4. Speed bounce – Who completes the most amount of jumps in 30 seconds

We look forward to hearing the results with our thanks to St. Abban’s Athletics Club for finding a super way to continue with their school’s athletics competition this year.

**Active Schools** - If you pass our school in good weather, you will quite likely see several of our classes outdoors, we thank all of our teachers who are helping to ensure that the children are physically active as often as possible and that every opportunity is taken to adapt learning to be active or outdoors.

**GAA** - We are delighted to welcome back Robert Samson from Carlow GAA Coaching. Weather permitting, Robert will coach the children in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class for the next three Friday mornings outside.

Carlow GAA have organised a colouring competition for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class which highlights the importance of Sound Support. By participating the children will learn about the importance of respecting referees and we will also be in with a chance to win a special Sports Day coordinated by Carlow GAA Staff in June at our school.

**ESB Science Blasts** – 6<sup>th</sup> class are enjoying the ESB Science Blast 2021. This is a free and fun-filled, interactive way to engage with STEM skills with online lesson plans and ESB Science Blast TV.

**Senior Infants** - During April Senior Infants were learning about the Post Office in Aistear play, while enjoying this the children wrote letters home. They really enjoyed the process of writing the letters, putting them in the post box, learning their address and best of all taking a trip to our local post box to send them on their way. We hope all families enjoyed receiving their letter!

**Sacramental Preparation 2021** – While this week we see some Covid-19 Restrictions lifted, the governments advice in relation to the sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion remains that they should **not** take place at this time. Bishop Denis has written to all parishes, this letter has been shared with all of the parents in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class. Our Bishop recognises that this is disappointing news and has asked that parishes do not set any dates for the celebration of these sacraments until further clarity is offered. He reminds us *“that there is absolutely no expiry date on sacraments. While our society is opening up the pandemic is still with us and we must remain vigilant. Let us do all we can to continue to encourage the preparation programmes and to keep the hearts up of the children and young people as they continue to await the sacraments.”*

**Creative School’s Week** - Creative Schools Ireland have contacted us to say that our school’s creative work will feature in the promotional footage for Ireland’s Creative School’s Week 2021. Well done all!

This week as we celebrate Creative School’s Week the children will enjoy – chalk drawing during lunchtime, musical lunchtimes (to sing and dance) and creative activities in class.

Our Creative School Committee Páidí Lynch, Tadhg Ffrench, Sophie Brennan, Harry Carter, Pippa O’ Brien, Emily McNally, Alanah Dunne, Ross Condell, Michael Byrne, Sophia Hinakis, Katie Farrell, Conor Dooley, Charlotte Hutton, Callum Byrne, Oisín McNally and Michael Kinsella met twice with our Creative Associate Mary Burke in April to help discuss the ideas and themes that are coming forward from the children, staff and parents to shape our Creative School’s Project.

**Standardised Testing** - The Department of Education has written to schools indicating that standardised testing in English and Mathematics will take place this year at the end of May - start of June. The results of the tests from 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class will be communicated to the Department to help them in their future planning for schools. Results for children in 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class will be communicated to parents on the child's school report. It is important to note that the school closures have had a significant impact on teaching and learning over the past two years, which may be reflected in the standardised test results for primary schools this year.

We remind parents that standardised tests only provide a snapshot of a pupil's performance on one day, on one type of test, they should not be taken as an absolute result and form only one part of the "jigsaw of information" about your child's overall progress. Results should always be framed in a broader context. The school glean important information from a variety of sources e.g. routine observation, class/ individual tests, class participation, assignments/homework and other teacher designed tests/reports/feedback. All of this information helps us to plan and work to maximise your child's learning. Our class teachers communicate directly with parents when they are concerned about a child's progress.

**Planting at the School** – We are very grateful to Ballinabranna/Raheendoran/Milford Development Group who are funding shrubs/planting/compost/mulch at the school to help improve the area around our bughotel in the hope of attracting new residents. Thank you to Aidan Lowry and Bernadette Power who are organising the purchasing and planting of these shrubs.

**Swift Boxes** - We have turned the calling system on for our Swift Boxes and hope that we may see the boxes used for nesting by a family of swifts this year! The calling system operates from May to September.

**Student Council** – Our Student Council have surveyed the children in the school to find out what they enjoyed most about remote learning, what suggestions they have for future remote learning, how safe they feel in school, who they can talk to if they need to and to see if our students have any suggestions for making our school a safer place.

Kayla Brown, Isabelle Farrell, Nicole Brennan Hennessy, Killian Sweeney, Freddie Comerford, Emma Dooley, Ross Farrell and Rían Tunstead have brought the survey results back to the classes and to staff. We were delighted to see that there were lots of things that the children enjoyed about remote learning, particularly being able to do the work whenever they liked, wearing whatever they wanted and being able to eat whenever they chose to. It was also very reassuring to see that 96% of children feel very safe in school!

**Fear Less: Reducing Anxiety in Children Aged 4-14 Years** Laois Education Centre in partnership with the Triple P - Parenting Programme are delivering a Fear-Less Seminar on Tuesday 18th May 2021 from 7.00-9pm.

This will offer Parents of children 4 - 14 years of age, tips and strategies to help their children manage their anxiety and provide practical evidence-based tips for parents and carers in these uncertain times.

You can register for free at the link. [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_pEZUOc5uRwaVrecf0ROrgw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pEZUOc5uRwaVrecf0ROrgw)

All information is confidential and your image or any identifying details will NOT be on screen.

**Triple P Groups and Workshops Online** - Parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic is a unique challenge for all parents, caregivers and families. Children and parents are anxious, and families are under pressure like never before. Being a parent to a child/teenager who is experiencing anxiety can be tough.

Anxious children / teenagers can seek constant reassurance have outbursts of anger / frustration and can feel sick when worried. Parenting has a crucial role to play in mitigating the potential long-term negative impacts of COVID-19 on children, particularly in relation to mental health.

Triple P parenting support also offers the following groups and workshops online :

- Junior Programme 2-10 years (2 hours x 5 group sessions)
- Teen Programme 11-15 years (2 hours x 5 group sessions)
- Junior Workshop (2-10 years) Dealing with Disobedience (2hrs x 1 session)
- Junior Workshop (2-10 years) Developing Good Bedtime Routines (2hrs x 1 session)
- Teen Workshop (11-15 years) Coping with Teenagers Emotions (2hrs x 1 session)

Contact Fiona Gallagher 0863801163 or Deirdre Dowling 0860274837 for more info or to book a place.

[Fiona.gallagher@hse.ie](mailto:Fiona.gallagher@hse.ie) [Deirdre.dowling@hse.ie](mailto:Deirdre.dowling@hse.ie)

**Supporting My Anxious Teen: A webinar for Parents/Guardians** - Nicola Culloty, (Full Circle CBT) and Kilkenny Education Centre will host a webinar on how Parents/Guardians can help to support their anxious teen/s. It will also explore how teenage brains are more vulnerable to anxiety. Parent-led Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) specific techniques will be examined. Participants will receive information on effective communication and how to talk to teenagers about mental health. The free webinar takes place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 from 6-7pm. Further details and bookings can be found at <https://eckilkenny.ie/coursebooking-2/primary-courses/1440-supporting-my-anxious-teen-a-webinar-for-parents-guardians.html>

### **Upcoming School Events/Closures**

June Bank Holiday – School closed Monday 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 only.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 is the last day of school for this school year.

Return to School - Monday 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 will be our starting date for the 2021-2022 School Year.